

Christmas, weather, and groceries

The holidays are thankfully behind us. No more Christmas music in shopping malls, elevators and on the radio.

The irony is that I have been singing Christmas music (the good stuff) in St. Olaf's choir since the beginning of Advent. I have sung every Christmas season for thirty-five years and I absolutely love it.

However, the radio saturation commuting from downtown Minneapolis to Howard Lake drove me crazy, no pun intended. It is like hearing a phonograph needle stuck on the same track and you cannot change the music.

Remember phonographs or turntables? I have a Bang & Olufsen of Denmark. It was so cool to own one back then. Am I showing my age?

The weather this winter has been so weird, hasn't it? For sure it is due to global warming.

I don't know why, but I was looking forward to a good winter of snow. In fact, if you make note of it, the entire nation has experienced some form of dynamic weather change. I guess Minnesota is no exception.

While packing to leave California this time last January, I was warned that Minnesota gets to 40 below sometimes, with serious wind chill factors that can easily give you frostbite.

Did we bring California weather with us? It has already been suggested that it is our fault. We are the reason there has been no snow. Are we the harbingers of things to come for Minnesota? Oooh... that's a skin prickler!

Maybe we should ask Colorado to ship to us Minnesotans the avalanche of snow they got in recent weeks. But there is no disguising the fact that I am a Minnesotan now, and I want some snow!

I have more kvetching to do (that's Yiddish for complaining). When is Howard Lake going to have a grocery store again? Never in its 85 year history have they been without

Musings of a transplant

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a grocery store. Is there any other incorporated city without one?

I notice that the liquor store is alive and well. In fact, every city I pass through I notice there is a plethora of liquor stores. Imagine Howard Lake without a liquor store. Now wouldn't that be the end of civilization as we know it! Why are we tolerating not having a grocery store?

My hairdresser Kathy, bless her heart, showed me a back route to get to Cub Foods in Buffalo, exactly 18 miles from my house. On returning from my commute to choir in Minneapolis and Minnetonka, I used to stop at Lunds in Wayzata, right off the freeway, but prices were clearly beyond my checkbook, often 30% higher than stores like Cub Foods.

I refuse to spend \$10 a pound for a chuck blade roast. Where does this meat come from? Kobe, Japan where cows are hand massaged to get the most tender outcome and volume in beef?

They do, however, have the best varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables, which I continue to purchase, also common milk products and Jewish products like blintzes (a stuffed rolled crêpe).

Everything else is purchased at Cub Foods. That shopping spree gets put off as long as possible or till the list on my refrigerator gets so long, I no longer have any room to put one more item. Then I make the 18 mile trek.

Oh, shall I mention that Lunds or Byerlys have people to unload for check out, bag your items, and deliver the bags to my car? Every other store I've gone to does not provide this service—such as Coburns, The Marketplace, Cash Wise or Cub

Foods.

In the scheme of things I guess it's a small thing, but when you factor in that you're about to spend close to \$200. You walk the aisles for 40 minutes piling up your shopping cart, then you have to unload everything from that deep large cart for the checker, including the 200 lb. cases of water (really great on your back) and you have to bag, which you don't have a clue how to do. It's a fine art bagging groceries.

Do I bag this and that first, hmm, maybe I should not pile cans on top of the eggs or bread, oops same thing on the chips.

Should I mention the unloading into the car, praying none of the bags break, then unloading again into the house fighting the garage door that weighs 50 tons that you're trying not to get whacked with, and the best part, unloading again to put away the groceries in the pantry or stock a freezer in the garage and the refrigerator in the kitchen. Are there any women out there reading this emboldened to strike on this issue?

Yet, there is the sweet with the bad. I keep meeting the most remarkable people in Howard Lake. Like Craig, my physical therapist at Phenomenal Rehabilitation. He treated my arm for several weeks and I have a wrecked back, too.

True to its name, it is a phenomenal place because it is an all-in-one deal; physical rehabilitation, fitness and exercise programs, on site chiropractic service, coaching on nutrition, and a commitment to core values thrown in for good measure.

He has a true Christian heart and spirit. He's not in it for the money, he just loves what he does. If he were Jewish, he would be called a mensch, Yiddish again, meaning a good person.

Meeting people like him in Howard Lake squashes all the kvetching I do in a nano-second. Maybe that's good for my soul and spirit as well.